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NOVEMBER

VOL.
33

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Weekly Journal

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1893.

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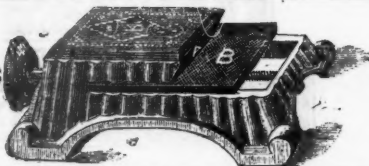
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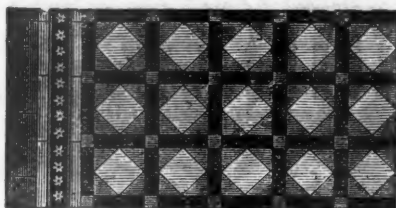
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BY BASIL.
AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

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MRS. JOHN idolised Archie. A good woman's whole heart goes out towards a child who has utterly and always been dependent upon her alone. Love tends downwards in another sense than Aristotle's, and is, like the sun, warmest when highest above its object. And so Archie's helpless infancy, friendless boyhood, and lonely outlook in life evoked all the warmth of Mrs. John's generous heart. Now Mrs. Pybus's hatred of Archie was naturally proportioned to Mrs. John's love for him; for Mrs. Pybus was a model mother-in-law.

The old lady used Archie, as witches of old used wax figures of their foes, to stab Mrs. John through him; and now, after his last escapade, she meditated a stroke of death. She would write to Mr. Tuck and have the youth packed off forthwith to school.

Mr. Tuck is eight years older than when last we had the pleasure to meet him, and is, therefore, eight years more his own grandmother than he was then. His thought, and care, and kindness towards himself are searching and unceasing, and leave no act or moment of his life unregarded. Nor will he allow you to leave it unregarded. If he is an old woman towards himself he is a big baby towards others, and shows everyone his new frock, so to speak, or the latest pin-scratch he has got, with a generous confidence that a stranger's interest in it will be as deep as his own.

Therefore, no one could know Mr. Tuck without hearing of the unconscionable Archie Guard, or being asked for advice and sympathy in this distressing case. And as everyone so consulted politely

assented, if only by silence, to Mr. Tuck's view of the case, his sense of ill-usage deepened every successive quarter-day. It was not so long since Dr. Grice—of his own motion—had extorted from him ten pounds a year more, that is, sixty pounds a year for the boy's maintenance and education, and as Mr. Tuck had only two thousand five hundred pounds a year for his own support, he felt the drain grievously, and groaned, and grumbled, and growled more loudly than ever.

While in this mood he received Mrs. Pybus's letter containing a terrible picture of Archie's troublesomeness; a statement—most exasperatingly put—of all the unpaid pains Mrs. Pybus had taken with his education, and a suggestion that he might be sent to school. Of course, Mr. Tuck took this rasping epistle to be the production of the mistress of the house, and equally of course, he construed it into an extortionate demand for more money. As for the suggestion that Archie might be sent to school, it was obviously meant to bring him to terms by the hint of a more costly alternative. Costly or not costly he would choose it, if only for the pleasure of disappointing the scheming greed of these bloodsuckers. But need it be costly? Surely there were schools which would board the boy for less than sixty pounds a year. He might punish these people without punishing himself, or even with profit to himself. He would see at once about it.

Accordingly Mrs. Pybus's letter had quite a large circulation. He ran about reading it to every friend or acquaintance he had, as if the matter were of the most vital importance to all Kingsford and its neighbourhood, and he appealed helplessly for advice to all to whom he read it, down to his very housekeeper.

The result was the following letter to

the Rev. John (Mr. Tuck would not condescend to notice his fair correspondent), received a fortnight after the affair of the rats:

"REV. SIR,—I am glad at once to be able to relieve you of the great trouble and expense my nephew has been to you. I have arranged for his board and education at The College, Gretstane, near Duxhaven, under the care of Mr. Paul Kett, M.A., and have promised Mr. Kett that he shall be in his charge on Tuesday next. You will be good enough to send him there on that day. You will quite understand the shortness of the notice: It does not entitle you to the quarter's payment in advance (made three weeks ago), as I am assured by my solicitor; but to prevent all dispute and litigation I shall not reclaim it. I shall be glad to have your acknowledgment of this letter; but any other communication you may think fit to make, must be made through my solicitor, Elliot Nott, Esq., Kirkclose, Kingsford.—I am, rev. sir, yours, etc., JAMES TUCK."

Like most weak men Mr. Tuck was tremendous at a distance, and by letter.

The effect of this bombshell was all that Mr. Tuck or Mrs. Pybus could have desired. The Rev. John, after his manner, read the letter three times before he could take in its purport. When he did take it in he looked over at Mrs. John with an expression that made her set down hastily the tea-pot she had raised to pour out his tea, and ask in a startled voice:

"What is it, John?"

John, in his slow way, was thinking how best to break news which he knew would be to her as the shock of a dear friend's death; but before he could get his thoughts together Mrs. John had the letter in hands that trembled as she read and re-read the first sentence, while her face grew white to the lips. In four days her boy was to be taken from her for ever. The shock was sickening. She looked over at Archie. The little victim, unconscious of his doom, was playing with Ponto. He was a very handsome boy, with a bright, fearless, open face, and eyes like sunshine on waves—liquid light in ceaseless motion; and he never looked more winning than at this moment, when he was teaching Ponto to toss up and catch, at a word, a lump of sugar poised on his nose.

"Look, moth—"

The laugh died out of his face as he met her miserable look. What had he done? He could think of no iniquity so dreadful

as to cause the haggard sorrow in her face. He looked bewildered for a moment, and then faltered out:

"Is it the galoshes, mother?" going up to her with the trouble in her face fully reflected in his own.

He had rigged out his mother's galoshes as racing-boats, and was paying now compound interest of remorse for his guilty joy. Mrs. John said nothing, and could say nothing at the moment. She put her arm round Archie's neck and pressed his head against her bosom, and smoothed back with a trembling hand the golden hair from his forehead, and kissed it with a clinging kiss. It was plainly something more terrible than the galoshes.

"What is it, mother?" looking up with eyes wide with wonder and trouble, and filling fast with tears.

Then Mrs. John gave way and hurried out of the room, and having cried herself calmer upstairs, returned bonneted, to tell the helpless Rev. John that she was off to catch Dr. Grice before he set out upon his round.

Dr. Grice thought that all was not yet lost. He regretted bitterly his demand for an extra ten pounds—to which, of course, both he and Mrs. John ascribed Mr. Tuck's thunderbolt—but he believed that Mr. Tuck would be glad to leave the child where he was, if the Rev. John offered to maintain him at a shilling a year less than the terms of Mr. Paul Kett, M.A. Therefore, the doctor telegraphed at once to ask Mr. Kett's terms, and having a reply in an hour stating them to be thirteen guineas a quarter, he advised Mrs. John to write a conciliatory letter, offering to maintain Archie on the old terms. Mrs. John, to make assurance doubly sure, offered, through the Rev. John, to maintain the boy for forty pounds a year, and so, of course, confirmed Mr. Tuck's construction of Mrs. Pybus's letter. Mrs. John, after a sleepless night, hurried out to meet the postman when the answer was due, yet dared not open it when she got it, but carried it back at still greater speed to the vicarage, and to the Rev. John's study. He was not so long this time in taking its contents in, not only because he was prepared for them, but also because of their brevity.

"Mr. Tuck begs to decline the Rev. Mr. Pybus's generous offer, and to say that Mr. Kett expects Mr. Tuck's nephew at Gretstane not later than Tuesday next."

Poor Mrs. John! Even Mrs. Pybus

might have pitied her remorsefully if she had seen all the anguish of her soul. But the old lady saw little of it, and that little pleased her. She was surprised and relieved to find that Mr. Tuck had said nothing of her letter, and, this anxiety being at rest, she was able to enjoy, and did enjoy, the consternation she had caused. And Archie? He was sorry to leave Mrs. John; he was glad of going to school. When he was with Mrs. John he was wretched, yet half an hour later, when with Tom Chown, he was full of all the fun that was before him in this new world. But to do him bare justice, he was a good deal more with Mrs. John than Tom Chown in these last few hours, and when the sad morning dawned, he would have sacrificed his golden visions to have stayed to comfort her. She was so ill and prostrate that she could not go with him as she had intended, and Archie realised fully for the first time her love and his loss, as she clung to him as the drowning cling to the plank that is slipping from them. An hour later he was intensely interested and delighted at the spectacle of the Great Northern express engine, Number Two Hundred and Forty-two, backing to be coupled to the train which was to bear him away. What would you have?

The tear down childhood's cheek that flows,
Is like the dew-drop on the rose.
When next the summer breeze comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.

Once in the train Archie was too busy to have much thought of either home or school. He had not only to run restless as a caged hyena from one window of the carriage to the other, lest any of the wonders of the country flying from under him should be lost; but he had also to try to keep "Uncle" John's laggard attention abreast with these wonders—a Sisyphean effort. The Rev. John's mind could be brought only with immense difficulty to any point, and rebounded like a relaxed bow from it the moment he was left again to himself. Only a child, and a very sanguine child, could hope to call his attention in time to anything on either side of a Great Northern express. It was always at least two miles in arrear. It was in arrear even at Duxhaven, which they would have left behind if Archie had not called the Rev. John's attention to a couple of boys with pea-shooters who had got out at this station, seemingly for the sole purpose of trying their artillery on each other at a longer range. The sight of the schoolboys

recalled to the Rev. John the purport of his journey, and as the porters were shouting apparently "Buxton," even he knew that this was as near an approach to "Duxhaven" as any railway porter was likely to make.

Accordingly he asked if it were Duxhaven in a leisurely manner, and was at once bundled out with his charge in a manner not at all leisurely, as the express was due to start.

Fortunately Mrs. John, if she had forgotten to label her husband, had not forgotten to address Archie's box and hamper, which were on the platform before them.

The Rev. John went to look after them, leaving Archie at the bookstall and near the two other youths, who were disputing with some warmth about the honour of having shot the guard in the ear as he was getting into the moving van. Then their attention was diverted to the Rev. John, who was moving their boxes in his search for Archie's.

"I say, Bolus, look at that old guy at our boxes. He's slipped through his clothes," said the elder youth facetiously.

Indeed, as the Rev. John's old-fashioned stand-up collars reached his ears, whilst his trousers did not reach his boots, Master Tandy's description was not unhappy.

"Let's have a shy at him," said Bolus, whose real name was Bell, but who was honoured with the name of "Bolus" because of his father's profession.

Bolus had no sooner levelled his piece than Archie knocked up its muzzle.

"Hulloa!" shouted the amazed Bolus.

"He's my uncle," cried Archie, very wroth.

"You want it, do you?" retreating a step or two to send a stinging shot into Archie's face.

Archie sprang forward, snatched the pea-shooter, and flung it on to the line, where a passing goods demolished it next moment.

Bolus, when he had recovered from his surprise, made for Archie, whom he would certainly and thoroughly have thrashed then and there, uncle or no uncle, if it had not been for the intervention of Tandy. Holding Bolus back he shouted to Archie:

"Get to your uncle, young 'un."

"I won't," said Archie, whose blood was up, and who might be kicked but wouldn't be conquered.

"Be quiet, Bolus; we can't have a shindy here. Perhaps he's for Polecat's. Bound for Polecat's, Plucky?"

Archie didn't recognise Mr. Paul Kett,

M.A., under this unsavoury title, nor, if he had, would he have condescended to answer the question.

A porter, coming up with the Rev. John at that moment, answered it for him.

"These young gents are for Mr. Kett's, sir. You might all go together in Tigg's trap."

Now the Rev. John had got strict orders from Mrs. John to make friends for Archie at any cost of anyone who had anything to do with Gretstane College. Therefore he took the two lads into the refreshment-room at once, and plied them with the fossil pastry for which these establishments are famous. Moreover, he took Tandy, as the elder, aside, and, tipping him with a sovereign to be expended in a school-treat, begged him to befriend Archie.

"I'll look after him, sir," said Tandy, better known as "Cochin," from his supposed mental and bodily resemblance to a cock of that breed. "He's a young 'un for the place, though," looking critically at Archie, who was comparing penknives with his late enemy, now gorged and gracious.

"Is Mr. Kett severe?" asked the Rev. John, as Cochin's manner suggested this inference.

"He's the gout," said Cochin significantly. "And there's Skunk," continued Cochin. "Skunk's safe to skin him," nodding towards Archie, "he always skins the little chaps."

"One of the masters?"

"He's a son of Polecat's, and Fet's another. Fet's a spy!" with an expression of such disgust in his face as spoke volumes for Fet's loathsomeness.

"Skunk" and "Fet" were both of course derived from Polecat, but there was a conflict between the best authorities as to whether "Fet" was a contraction of "Ferret" or "Fetid."

"How does he skin them?" asked the Rev. John, as if he was enquiring into a process just patented by an inventive butcher.

"He'll get all his lush out of him, and bully him. He's an inf—I beg your pardon, sir."

At this point the porter returned to say that Tigg's trap was in the station-yard, and the Rev. John and Archie followed Cochin and Bolus into it.

It was worth waiting on the platform to hear Master Tandy's description of Gretstane College, since it was truer and terser than that of its prospectus; but we can wait no longer, as the Rev. John's train is

due in less than two hours, and it is three-quarters of an hour's drive to the college.

The college was an imposing structure. It looked palatial, but it was all front. Seen at a distance in profile it appeared a thick wall, for the rooms, all long and narrow, faced you lengthwise. On the left was the school-room, with the play-room for its upper storey; on the right, the dining-room, with the dormitories for its upper storey, and between lay the apartments of the principal.

Into the show-room of these apartments, the library, the Rev. John and Archie were ushered, while Cochin and Bolus shot off with steps swift (though stealthy while within Kett's dominions) to the playground.

"Archie," said the Rev. John while they were to themselves for a moment.

"Yes, uncle."

"You'll have little troubles, Archie, but don't write about them to your mother. It would only fret her and do no good."

"No, uncle," said the lad in a faltering voice, trying to keep back the tears, which the mention of his mother—not of his troubles—brought to his eyes.

The Rev. John, as he looked down on the wistful little face upturned to his, realised for the first time the desolation of the child, which he was making more desolate by this prohibition. He did what he had never done before—not even when Archie was a child—he stooped and kissed the boy's forehead.

"God bless you, my boy!" This extraordinary demonstration of tenderness from Uncle John showed the child, also for the first time, and as by a lightning flash, the great gulf which now separated him from his mother.

"Tell her," he said with a choking sob, "I'll—I'll not ek—ek—climb."

Not a moving message—ludicrous rather. But as his climbing of anything—house, tree, or haystack—was his own chief delight and his mother's chief terror, the promise was the dearest thing he could think of at the moment to send her.

Here the principal entered, an immense man, six feet two, and stout in proportion, with a fascinating squint. This mesmerising obliquity of vision was invaluable to him in his profession, since it gave him the semblance of omniscience; for, like a good portrait, he seemed to look at once at all who looked at him from any point. Any boy who glanced up from his book or his plate found himself held with one glittering

eye, while the other was piercing into the guilty soul of a youth at the opposite side of the room. With visitors, on the other hand, this Argus could beam simultaneously on parent and pupil, flattering each with the consciousness of a special attention. And he beamed sincerely on such; for, when in good-humour, he was the most genial and jocose of men, as little likely to be suspected of cutting anything but a joke in school, or of tickling a youth otherwise than with laughter, as Byron's pirate was of piracy:

He was the mildest mannered man
That ever scuttled ship, or cut a throat.

But he had a quick temper, quickened sometimes to ferocity by the gout.

"Mr. Pybus, how do you do? Master Tuck—eh? Time to tuck in, Master Tuck, tea-time, you know—eh?" giving Archie a playful box with the back of his hand on the ear.

"His name is Guard, Mr. Kett. Mr. Tuck is his uncle. Archie Guard."

"Oh, Guard, is it? Prenez garde, look out, take care, pay attention. Prenez garde's your motto, Master Guard. We shall keep guard, Mr. Pybus, depend upon it. Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Who's to guard Guard—eh? Why his guardian, to be sure. And who's your guardian now, my boy—eh? Mr. Paul Kett to be sure," with a sportive chuck under the chin. Mr. Kett could never resist a joke, and his one idea of a joke was a pun—especially a classical pun. "You'll join us at tea, Mr. Pybus?"

"No, thank you," said the Rev. John, shrinking nervously from such an ordeal. "I've kept the waggonette as I've to catch a train. Good-bye, Archie; good-bye, my child," pressing into Archie's hand the two sovereigns with which he was to have himself bribed the establishment. "For the servants, and to treat the boys," he whispered. "Thank you, Mr. Kett—no farther, pray. Good-bye;" and he was gone.

But the courteous Mr. Kett would see him to the door, and even to the carriage unfortunately. For at the bang of the carriage-door the horses, impatient to get home, started unexpectedly, and the hind-wheel passed over the principal's gouty toe, putting him to intolerable torture.

At this moment there was a tumultuous peal from a great bell hung outside the school-room, summoning the boys to tea. Mr. Kett limped in to preside, looking into the library on the way to summon Archie curtly to follow him. Now at

meal-times Mr. Kett, as a rule, was harassingly jocose, and kept the table on a roar; for the boys got his jokes done for them by a youth named Moffat. He sat next the principal, and was from long experience able to divine pretty correctly from Mr. Kett's manner whether a joke was or was not intended. The boys, therefore, kept one wary eye fixed on Master Moffat for the signal for an irrepressible outburst of laughter. If the joke was not an old one, or in Latin (for a Latin quotation was almost certain to be a joke, and a joke, too, which it was to one's credit to construe); if, we say, the joke was new and in the vernacular, and therefore too stiff for Mr. Moffat, he discriminated it, as the learned pig discriminates the letters he is told to pick out, from the manner of his revered preceptor. To-night, Mr. Kett, as we may well imagine, was not in a jocose mood, but in much anguish and a bitter bad temper. When, therefore, he had entered the dining-room, and had "sworn a prayer" in the form of a grace, he looked round with an eye a-hungered for a victim, and pounced upon the wretched Cochin. Cochin had omitted to pay his respects.

"Oh, Master Tandy," exclaimed Mr. Kett almost in the same breath with the grace, "I hope you'll pardon me, I ought to have paid my respects to you, in common politeness, before I sat down to tea. *Maxima debetur puero reverentia.*"

Every eye was on the Coryphæus, Moffat. He was in doubt at the beginning of this satirical address, but was thoroughly reassured by the Latin quotation, and therefore gave an unhesitating signal for laughter. The hall shook with a shout of laughter. So hysterical was the delight of Bolus, that he must needs jump up and down on his chair, and give it full vent; but he was suddenly frozen in mid-air, in the attitude of one who holds a back for leap-frog. He dared not even sit down in the awful stillness, lest he should call fatal attention to himself. For the stillness was awful as the principal shot up like an explosion.

"Who laughed?" glaring from face to face to find on each an expression which said more plainly than words that it never had laughed, and never would laugh in this world. "Master Tandy, do me the favour to wait upon me after tea in the library. Mr. Nicholl"—Mr. Nicholl was the usher, better known by the name of "Tongs" from the expression of his legs—

"Mr. Nicholl, you will be good enough to keep the boys in the schoolroom every evening from six to nine, till the names of the ringleaders of this outburst of insolence are given up. Who's hiding behind backs there? Oh, Master Bell; Mas—ter Bell, perhaps you might find time when tea is over, Master Bell, to accompany Master Tandy to the library to pay your respects to the principal." The misguided Bolus resumed his seat with a Satanic look at Moffat, who had led him to the slaughter.

It was not to be wondered at that only decimation could appease the principal, so transparently factitious was the sudden and simultaneous roar of laughter; the only wonder was that Mr. Kett had so often been taken in by it when he was in a jocose humour. But excessive vanity is as blind as excessive love.

After a doleful tea the boys gathered together for the few moments that remained to them before six, to abuse Moffat, as an African abuses his discredited fetish, and to decide by lot who the victims of the Minotaur were to be. Moffat magnanimously devoted himself, without lot, to the slaughter, resigning at the same time his perilous and thankless post of Coryphæus.

He'd be hanged, he said sorely, if he'd set Kett's jokes for them again, as though they were partridges.

He insisted besides upon there being at least three other victims sent with him to the slaughter. Lots were drawn for three, therefore, and Archie with two others came forth from the urn. This was preposterous, and was felt so to be; but, as the alternative was that the die should be recast, no one but Moffat and Archie's fellow-scapegoats would confess to seeing it in that light.

"If you send in the young 'un, Kett will see it's a sham, that's all," said Moffat decisively.

Archie's other fellow-victims also held his immolation to be monstrous, and clamoured for the lots to be drawn all over again, to find themselves, of course, in a minority of two. Hereupon Archie, seeing an opening for heroism, said he didn't mind going in, and was vociferously applauded therefore by all except his fellow-scapegoats.

It was an unfortunate step for the child. Kett had got from Mr. Tuck Mrs. Pybus's account of him at second-hand and with compound interest, and was prepared to find him incredibly incorrigible for his years. When, therefore, Archie was

marshalled with the others by Tongs into the library, Kett took another view of the case altogether from that feared by the boys. He fancied Archie had volunteered from bravado. Now it was his fixed principle that an obstinate boy must be mastered at once and once for all.

"Oh, you were one of the ringleaders, were you? Come here, sir."

Archie came near, trembling. Mr. Kett held in his hand a cane, hot from the hands of Bolus and Cochin.

"What brings you here, sir?"

"I came myself, sir."

"Oh, you came yourself, sir, did you? No one sent you—eh?"

"No, sir."

"You wanted to find out what this was like?" with a fierce flourish of the cane.

Archie, truth to tell, repented of his heroism and stood dumbfounded and fascinated by the fierce eye which was fixed on him, while the other fork of the flashing lightning pierced Moffat and Co. to the marrow. Mr. Kett, full of his prepossession about the child, took his dazed look for the expression of dogged defiance.

"Very well, young gentleman, very well. We shall see who'll tire first at this game. Come, hold out your hand. Now, sir, what brought you in here?"

Archie looked up, silent and helpless. Down came the cane with all the force of fury on the little soft hand. The pain was stunning and the child cried out.

"Oh, we can sing, can we? I thought we should hear something at last. Perhaps we may be taught to talk presently. The other hand, my little friend, the other hand," tapping Archie's left shoulder with the cane.

But the child was quite stunned and bewildered, and heard nothing but a singing sound in his ears, while he saw Mr. Kett and the boys as through broken and scudding clouds, mistily and intermittently. But Mr. Kett of course took his stupefaction for contumacy, and, as his wrath rose, struck Archie's shoulder more and more sharply.

"Come, come, sir; out with it; out with the other hand. You won't, won't you?" with sudden savageness, seizing Archie by the collar of his coat and flogging him on the back till he was breathless, when he flung him from him, a limp heap, into a corner of the room.

Cochin, to his immortal honour, did an act as heroic for his years as many that have earned the Victoria Cross. He started

forward, raised Archie up, and helped him from the room, Kett being too much confounded by his audacity to interfere. Cochin was certain that he would be paid out for it many times over, but he was wrong. Mr. Kett, at bottom, was a kind-hearted man, though a demoniac when enraged, and Cochin's courageous kindness went to his credit with the principal when he came to himself.

Cochin helped Archie into the now deserted dining-room, got him a glass of water, and sat by him, saying soothing things till the convulsive sobs, which shook his whole frame, began to grow less frequent and violent.

"Would you like to come into the playground, Guard?"

"Oh, please——" pausing for his friend's name.

"Cochin," filled in that young gentleman as naturally as if he had got this name at the font.

"Please, Cochin, do you think I might go to bed?"

Archie, like other wounded creatures, wanted to be alone, and thought bed the safest solitude. The boy had no business in bed at that hour, and before prayers; but Cochin, thinking he himself might as well be in for a pound as a penny, resolved to risk the responsibility of taking Archie to the dormitory. Accordingly, when Archie had got his night-shirt from his box, Cochin stole upstairs with him to the dormitory, showed him his bed, and left him by its side, on his knees, sobbing still.

An hour later, Cochin stole up again, at really great risk to himself—for the dormitory was forbidden ground at this hour—to console Archie with some cake. He found the child asleep, with the tears still on his eyelashes, and with an envelope clutched in his hand. It was a stamped envelope, addressed by Mrs. John to herself for Archie to enclose a letter in. He had taken it out of his box when he had got his night-shirt, to find what solace he could in it, and had fallen asleep with it in his hand. Cochin knew what it was and what it meant, and was moved.

"Poor little beggar! He's a young 'un for the place," he said, as he slipped the slice of cake under his pillow.

Archie did not go through very heroically with his self-devotion as a scapegoat, but the letter he enclosed next day in this envelope was, in its way, heroic, for, remembering the Rev. John's parting

caution, he did not put into it a word about his trouble.

"DEAR MOTHER,—Please write soon. There are a great many boys here. There's no boy as little as me. The boy we saw at the station—the big boy—is very kind. His name is Kochin. He was very kind to me last night. I'm to learn Latin and jography. Please write when you get this.—Your affectionate son,

"ARCHIE GUARD."

AS OTHERS SEE US.

"KNOW thyself" was the advice of the Greek philosopher, and it was in a somewhat similar spirit that Robert Burns penned the wish for the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us. Still, the two things are not exactly alike, for, although it would be extremely useful in private or business life to be able to see exactly what impression we are making on our friends and acquaintances, it does not by any means follow that that impression would be any nearer the truth than the extremely erroneous ideas we are all apt, at times, to form of ourselves.

How unlike the actual truth may be the impressions we make upon others, can be very well proved by a study of books of travel of the ordinary type. The average globe-trotter's view of the national characteristics, temperament, and life of the people of Japan, of China, and of India, for instance, has probably but a very remote connection with actual fact, and we know that even the most observant adherent of Cook or of Gaze is not likely to bring back any very trustworthy or valuable observations as the result of a tour of a couple of months on the Continent. Even the lively Gaul, who is usually credited with a more brilliant insight and with keener powers of observation than fall to the lot of more plodding and less mercurial mortals, is apt to hold up to nature a mirror which distorts and exaggerates, rather than to reproduce actual facts in a way which may be useful and instructive to the people whose manners and customs are supposed to be reflected. And it is not only to the flippant insolence and self-satisfied ignorance of such slap-dash feuilletonists as M. Assolant that this remark applies. The cultivated intellect and trained habits of observation of even so able a critic as M. Taine appear to have been warped in some way, when he

came to describe the English people, their ways, and their literature, and it is scarcely too much to say that, until within the last few months, no Frenchman has ever published a book which could be described as giving a fair picture of England and its inhabitants, painted from a real, intelligent, and impartial study of the people, and of the circumstances which mould and influence the national character.

The exception to the rule has been a long time in coming, but it has come at last, and English people may read with profit and interest, as well as with amusement, by far the greater part of the contents of the last contribution to the history of the English people as written by their neighbours.*

M. Max O'Rell is understood to have been, when at work in London under his real name, the teacher of French at an important public school, and, according to his own preface, has lived among us, a respectable, tax-paying citizen, for ten years. During that time he has evidently acquired an intimate knowledge of the English language, and has used his eyes and his ears to excellent purpose. His familiarity with our political, legal, and ecclesiastical customs, principles, and prejudices, is, it is not too much to say, far greater than that possessed by the average Briton; while his analysis of the national character is keen, subtle, and ingenious, severe sometimes, but always, in the main, just. Indeed, his fairness, and his desire to do justice to the people whom he undertakes to describe, are conspicuous throughout the book. Even where his conclusions may appear to an English mind a little forced, a little, perhaps, over-coloured, his case is always fairly argued, and his points carefully and soundly made. The motto from Montaigne, which appears on the title page, "*C'est icy un livre de bonne foy, lecteur,*" is amply borne out by the greater part of the contents of the book. It is undoubtedly written in good faith, and much of it, as we have already said, is infinitely more interesting and valuable than the great majority of French criticisms on the people of this country. But—there is an awkward but—it is a thousand pities that M. Max O'Rell has allowed the occasional temptation to be smart to be too much for him; has found it impossible, indeed, to avoid writing what so keen an observer and so able a writer must have

known to be nonsense. By far the greater part of the book has been written thoughtfully and with an evident sense of responsibility—"de bonne foy," in fact—but occasionally the author has be-thought himself of his Parisian "gallery," and has fallen back on some of those good old stock boulevard traditions of England and English people, which French wags can never resist, and the result is that truth and fiction, observation and hearsay, sense and nonsense are mixed up together in the book in the strangest possible salad. Two or three good old-fashioned Joe Millers also show that he has picked up every kind of information during his stay among us, and the courage with which he relates these as having happened to himself or to his friends is worthy of special admiration.

Let us turn over the pages of "*John Bull et Son Ile,*" and pick out a few things which strike us as being scarcely generally known to English people, premising, on M. O'Rell's authority, that the word *monsieur* is invariably pronounced by English people "*mossou,*" "*moissié,*" "*mochou,*" "*mochié,*" or "*monnezire.*"

As we are proud, brave, calm, obstinate as the mule and tenacious as the octopus, as well as past-masters in the arts of the diplomatist—surely M. O'Rell is poking his fun here—besides being a little eccentric and even mad, it naturally follows that we do all sorts of odd things, and are not very nice people in public. It is a common thing for people to walk from London to Edinburgh for pleasure (and, indeed, the custom of taking healthy exercise is so general, that nobody dies in England except in a green old age), and it is probably in view of journeys of this kind that the British tourist requires nothing in the way of luggage but a flannel shirt, a dozen collars, a walking-stick, and a couple of pairs of socks. When we do travel by rail we are rude to each other, and look at each other with a suspicious and grumbling expression, which is, after all, not surprising, seeing that any women whom we may happen to meet travelling alone are probably either prepared to levy black-mail on the unsuspecting, or to overwhelm us with tracts; and, even if we see that our neighbour's fusees have ignited and set light to his coat-tails, we do not think of disturbing him for so trifling a matter—even if we happen to remember that M. Max O'Rell has derived this national trait from an exceedingly venerable story.

* *John Bull et Son Ile, Mœurs Anglaises Contemporaines*, par Max O'Rell. Paris, Calmann Lévy, Rue Auber 3.

In English family-life there are reserve and constraint, but no intimacy, no expansion. There is friendship, but little love. Sons seldom kiss their mothers, never their fathers; and hence it naturally follows that, when the father dies, the only question which is asked is, "Was he insured?" and, that point being satisfactorily disposed of, the worthy man is buried, and no more is thought about him. In Scotland the relations between father and children are even worse. Unless you have been in Scotland you can have no idea how serious life can be. A Scotch friend of our author's goes, it appears, every year to spend a month with his father, a minister of the Presbyterian Church and in other respects a person of consideration. On the day of the son's departure he always finds on the breakfast-table his little account for the month, and, being a wary Scotchman like his father, carefully checks the items and the addition before paying it, when this is the sort of conversation which takes place: "But, father, I see you have charged me with eggs and bacon for breakfast yesterday. I assure you I never touched the eggs."

"You are wrong, my boy," says papa. "They were on the table. There was nothing to prevent your having them!"

Another interesting Scottish friend of M. O'Rell's presents his children, when they attain their majority, with an account of all that he has paid for them from the time of the monthly nurse upwards, and the dutiful children sign an undertaking to pay the amount in due course.

We should be sorry to say that these two stories are not facts, but we have certainly heard something very like them before. At all events such cases are hardly sufficiently common to form the basis of an argument.

English girls—except that they have terribly long feet—appear to have fascinated M. O'Rell. "When they are pretty," he says, "they have no equals on earth; they are angels of beauty." It is a pity, therefore, that their faces should be so often without expression, that their eyes should be frequently without brilliancy and piquancy, that their teeth should be long and prominent, and that they should frequently laugh like rhinoceroses and disclose their gums in the process. Also it is sad that English women should so rarely be pretty after thirty. M. O'Rell, however, pays so high a compliment to English women all round—except those

of the lower classes, for whom he has not a good word—that it would be ungenerous to pick out the little blots on this part of the picture.

M. O'Rell is justly severe on the "jerry builders" by whom the greater part of the suburbs of London have been built, and has much to say about the villa residence, with its bad bricks, its ill-fitting doors and windows, its damp, and its leakages. "It rains in your house," he had occasion to remark to his landlord one day. "Well," was the reply, "umbrellas are cheap!"

This state of things, it appears, is principally due to free trade, and to that furious struggle to buy everything in the cheapest market which is natural to us. To this cause were also due the faulty material and ultimate collapse of a pair of evening shoes, for which M. O'Rell paid eleven and sixpence, and which "gave out" after an hour's dancing—to the intense disgust of the shoemaker, who had not intended to guarantee the shoes for any such purpose. Either M. O'Rell or the shoemaker procured this story, if not in the cheapest, certainly in the oldest market.

Altogether our shopkeepers and men of business did not please M. O'Rell, and, from the chapter in which he deals with them, some odd things are to be learnt. Thus, if you pay a shopkeeper a sovereign, he will try it on a metal slab, and to be even with him, you will, in your turn, test in the same way every coin he gives you in change. The adjective "German" is, it appears, in English commerce the synonym for "bad," as, for instance, German silver and German sausages.

M. O'Rell maintains apparently seriously enough "that a London shopkeeper would think himself dishonoured if he did not use false weights; that a railway clerk would hang himself if he did not rob you of a shilling in passing your change for a sovereign through his window; and that an omnibus conductor would not keep his place a month if he did not find some way of doubling his income by robbing the company or the passengers;" though why the omnibus proprietors should discharge a man for not robbing them does not quite appear. Strange to say M. O'Rell limits his censure to the inferior class of London tradesmen (of the "basse classe," as he says later on), although he talks before about "un boutiquier de Londres," as if they were all alike. All the tradesmen he had to do with in the country were agreeable,

honest, and "I may almost say of superior education."

Finally, M. O'Rell knows an English shipowner who sold all his sailing-vessels to his sons, and immediately set up a line of steamers in opposition to them, and yet another Englishman who invariably takes an insurance ticket when he travels by rail, and is always rather disappointed when he arrives safe and sound at his destination. This Englishman again seems like an old friend.

According to "John Bull et Son Ile," the streets and public places of London are not at all nice places, and, besides being gloomy and repellent, abound with all sorts of dangers, of which that of having to pay black-mail rather than be accused of all sorts of offences against the law, appears to have most excited M. O'Rell's occasionally rather lively imagination. He is especially rough on the parks. Hyde Park is a vast field, badly kept up, in which, as indeed in all the other parks, beggars and squalid wretches of all sorts swarm all day—M. O'Rell is quite sure of this, for he goes out of his way to contradict another French writer on the point—and in which all sorts of horrors of a cut-throat nature are perpetrated after dark. On the whole, it is desirable to avoid the parks altogether, for M. O'Rell declares, and it is only polite to believe him, that he heard a magistrate say to a gentleman who had got into a difficulty in the park, "I am quite ready to believe that you are innocent, but what were you doing in the park?" In this connection it may be noted that M. O'Rell describes the London police-magistrates as the failures of the English bar.

No one ever strolls in the streets. When an Englishman has finished his work he walks home as quickly as he can, and never goes out again in the evening. At nightfall the parks and the less-frequented districts of the metropolis are entirely given up to thieves and other bad characters, of whom the police take no notice.

Under these circumstances it is natural that "Le flaneur n'existe pas à Londres; dans les parcs il serait suspect." Certainly M. O'Rell has a mysterious grudge against the London parks. For the rest he finds it impossible to describe the drunkenness visible in the streets, except to say that Saturday night is a veritable witches' sabbath, and that the women get as drunk as the men. Unhappily we know that there is too much truth in this last complaint, although M. O'Rell considerably

over-states his case, and here, as elsewhere, weakens the effect of his criticism by a habit of over-hasty generalisation.

But if M. O'Rell finds the exterior of our cities more sad and gloomy than it is possible to describe, he has nothing but good to say of our homes. They are the paradise of rational comfort and of well-considered luxury, and in them, amid a sufficiency of carpets and with plenty of tea to drink, the Englishwoman is thoroughly happy. The tea-kettle in England, like the pot-au-feu in France, is the emblem of the domestic virtues. That we should have studied the art of making ourselves comfortable is natural enough. Our winter lasts for eight months of the year, and the weather during this period is so grey and dull, so wet and dirty, and we suffer so grievously from the spleen, that comfortable homes—with plenty of tea and carpets—are a necessity of our existence. It is odd to find so generally well-informed and acute a writer dallying with that fine, crusted, old French superstition, "le spleen Anglais."

Another good old superstition crops up in a somewhat modified manner. We seem to have given up selling our wives at Smithfield, for M. O'Rell only remembers one man who sold his wife to a friend, and then the sale appears to have been by private contract; but they do not enjoy a high place in our consideration, nevertheless. "Married women only occupy a secondary position in society," the student of English manners is informed. "In the lower classes the husband stakes his wife at play against ten shillings, or half-a-crown, or a drink."

Comfortable, however, as are our homes, there is only one moment when the Englishman really puts aside the cares of business and gives himself up to gaiety. This is at Christmas time, when the sacred rites of the plum-pudding are celebrated—the plum-pudding, the ingredients of which are startling indeed. Such vast quantities of beer, brandy, and spice are added to this truly national dish by the vulgar classes, that the pudding burns your throat—something after the manner, we may suppose, of the famous American whisky, which is said to resemble, in its passage down the drinker's throat, a torchlight procession—and it is not surprising to hear that it is necessary to go on all-fours and to cling to the table before one can swallow a mouthful or two!

Except, it may be assumed, at Christmas, dinner in England is but a dull

business. The English middle-class takes care that its meal shall be as simple and unappetising as possible, from a puritanical feeling that we have been put into the world to mortify the flesh by refusing the good things which Providence has given us, and M. O'Rell's account of the way in which food is taken is strictly in accord with this view. Everybody is motionless and silent. If you venture to make a remark, you are answered in monosyllables. You are only spoken to to be asked if you want any more beef—when it is considered "*comme il faut*" to decline—unless, indeed, you are a foreigner, in which case you are sure to be asked two invariable questions: "Have you been long in England?" and "How do you like it?" To these you must return the shortest possible answers. It is not surprising that M. O'Rell—who surely must have been unfortunate in his hosts—declares that, after an hour of this sort of thing, a strong desire used to come over him to shriek aloud, or to pinch his neighbours to see if they were real or only stuffed. Nor does he seem to have had much more lively experiences of the virtuous tea, if we may judge by his description, which is worth translating in full.

"It is when John drinks his hot tea in little draughts, nibbling a piece of toast or bread-and-butter, that he is really beautiful and edifying. Almost all the middle-class takes tea at five o'clock and makes a meal of it. More than that, John sometimes gives a 'tea-party.' The company then sits down to bread-and-butter, and toast, and jam, and a dry and black cake, which in colour and taste resembles gingerbread. All the old maids are in the seventh heaven. You should see them, with an angelic smile, displaying their tusks of an inch long, their eyes modestly cast down, and their hands clasped on the edge of the table, waiting for the mistress of the house to ask them if they take milk and sugar, or if their tea is to their liking.

"Is your tea as you like it?"

"Oh, very nice, thank you!"

"No one moves his body, which should remain perfectly upright, the head only being slightly moved. . . . At dinner, even if the conversational languishes every moment, the beef and the pale ale, at all events, keep you up a little, but, with tea and a slice of bread-and-butter, you have not the strength even to try to revive it. You give up the attempt at once, and the conversation dies in agonies. . . . It is appalling."

And so it must have been. Even Mr. J. L. Toole's friend, who always came home to tea, would have thought twice before committing himself to such an entertainment.

Of course, M. O'Rell has a great deal to say about our climate—that terrible English climate which is responsible for so much "spleen," and for so many other British maladies. To say that the sun shines in England is merely a rhetorical image, and the phenomenon occurs so seldom that whenever it does happen—there is no mistake about it, "*chaque fois que le soleil paraît*"—his photograph is taken as a remembrance. Our fogs are terrible inflictions, and of two kinds. Of these, the yellow variety, which is known as the "pea-soup," is of such terrible malignity that, if you do not wear a respirator, you will spit blood or be promptly suffocated. Our author handsomely admits that these fogs do not occur so frequently as most Frenchmen suppose. They rarely appear for more than fifteen days in the year, but then the other three hundred and fifty are generally hazy. When the day is clear, it is delicious, but unfortunately this is a rare phenomenon. And yet there must be enough pleasant weather to impress itself upon the mind, for M. O'Rell says in another passage: "If the morning is fine, you cannot fail to admire in the Park that softened pearl-grey light which I have really never seen in my life except in the London Parks."

The chapter on the administration of justice in "*John Bull et son Ile*," shows a much clearer comprehension of the subject than is probably possessed by nine Englishmen out of ten, but contains one of those singular mistakes which strike one the more forcibly from their occurring in the midst of so much that is well observed and acutely criticised. "In England," says M. O'Rell, contrasting our police arrangements with those of his own country, "in England you collar a policeman who has insulted or touched you, and walk him off to the station-house." It is to be hoped that touchy French gentlemen, who may repose absolute confidence in M. O'Rell's statements, will not venture upon this experiment.

M. O'Rell's opinion of the state of the drama in England is extremely uncompromising. "The English stage of the nineteenth century has fallen as low as possible," and if his description of English audiences could be taken as fairly correct, it would

not be necessary to go far to find a reason for this state of things. John Bull thinks it "de mauvais ton" to applaud, and only looks with pity on the artists who try to amuse him. Any actor who really gives himself up to the passion of the scene is considered ridiculous. The aristocracy only goes to the theatre to kill time and to yawn; the *bourgeoisie* has no taste for the theatre; the lower orders never dream of going there. M. O'Rell's experience of London theatres seems to have been principally obtained at Drury Lane, during the run of "Pluck," and of the Surrey, during the run of "Mankind" (where, however, he must assuredly have seen plenty of the *bourgeoisie* in the pit and boxes, and of the lower orders in the gallery); but he is good enough to admit that there is one theatre in London which one can call serious, the Lyceum. Such theatres as the Haymarket, the St. James's, the Vaudeville, the Princess's, and the Adelphi at the West End, and the Britannia and the Standard in the East, seem to be unknown to our author. He mentions Mr. Irving, but has apparently never heard of Mrs. Kendal or Mrs. Bancroft, of Mr. Wilson Barrett or Mr. Coghlan, of Mrs. Stirling or Miss Terry. The principal actor is little, if at all, assisted by the rest of the company, and, even in the leading theatres, if the two principal parts are well or fairly played, the others are insufferably bad. At a time when we have all been, with justice, congratulating ourselves on the improvement which has taken place in the ensemble of our theatrical performances, this criticism reads oddly. We may be permitted, however, to attach but little weight to M. O'Rell's opinions on the subject, seeing that he seriously declares that, with the exception of Shakespeare's plays, and of "The School for Scandal" and the "Rivals," there is no English acting drama at all. "It is a fact, strange and incomprehensible even in this country of contrasts. To have Shakespeare and to have nothing else in the national repertoire; Shakespeare, the king of poets, inimitable, inaccessible, a sort of demi-god—and after him nothing, absolutely nothing!" M. O'Rell's enthusiasm for Shakespeare does him honour, but he does not seem to know much about our stage, for all that.

Every British cobbler has a piano in his back-shop, and all the women, without exception, play on that ubiquitous instrument, but the favourite music of John Bull is the oratorio, which he enjoys "sitting motionless

and with his eyes shut, as if he were listening to a sermon." An oratorio is for John a foretaste of the joys which await him in the next world. M. O'Rell, for his part, takes a different view of the sacred music of "the Haydns, the Handels, the Bachs, and the Mendelssohns." Their oratorios seem to him to have been written under the influence of the terrible "spleen;" they are Thames fogs set to music! M. O'Rell's opinion of English musicians is not, on the whole, favourable. The big drum, he declares, is "the foundation of all English music."

Himself a teacher, M. O'Rell has much to say about our schools, public and private, and has been considerably impressed by the freedom enjoyed by the boys and young men in our great public schools and universities, and by the confidence which is reposed in them. How it may be with public schools in London we do not know, but a rather more intimate acquaintance with Eton than M. O'Rell has apparently enjoyed would, we should imagine, have made him think twice before saying "the cigarette is unknown in the great English educational centres;" and Dr. Hornby would scarcely let this expression of opinion pass muster, "if it were forbidden as strictly as it is with us, we should see it prospering in England as it does in France. The only attraction about smoking is that it is forbidden fruit; allow it, and it loses all its flavour." In our own time at Eton smoking was one of the highest crimes and misdemeanours of which a boy could be capable, and we believe that the rule has been little, if at all, relaxed since. With regard to private schools it is odd to find that M. O'Rell is under the impression that "schoolmaster" is a word which excites nothing but contempt, and that the proprietor of a private school is a poor devil whose trade has never recovered the blow which was dealt it when Mr. Wackford Squeers was created. Whether the young gentlemen of Oxford are always at the "Grand Club of the University, the Union" when they are not at their studies, may be doubted, and it is possible that it may strike instructed readers of "John Bull," that its author has looked upon this side of his subject with spectacles of too roseate a tint altogether.

M. O'Rell gives a singularly clear and lucid description of our political system, and of the functions and proceedings of our Houses of Parliament, except that he has some odd views as to the constitution of the House of Lords, which, by the way, he

describes as an insult to the common-sense of the English nation. Nine-tenths of the peerages date only from the last century; "The heroes who are ennobled are the heroes of money, the 'pale-ale' and the 'double-stout' have more Earls and Barons on their conscience than all the rest of the national products put together."

Sunday in London, as may be supposed, produced a terrible effect on M. O'Rell. It is a day of mourning, a day of death, he declares, and any one who wants a remembrance of London which will never be effaced from his memory, should come and look at it on Sunday. If an east wind happens to be blowing, the experience will be all the more striking. On Sunday in London not a living soul is to be seen in the streets, except the good folks who go to church, and the few vagabonds who lean up against the walls until such time as the public-houses open their doors. Everybody, or nearly everybody, goes to church, which is not difficult, seeing that there are nearly as many churches as public-houses, and if by chance any well-brought-up Englishman absents himself from divine service, he never thinks of going out of doors during the canonical hours. Stay, M. O'Rell recalls one instance of a backslider who took a walk with him one Sunday morning, but even this sinner was not lost to all sense of decency and propriety, for, on seeing that M. O'Rell was about to sally forth armed with a walking-stick, he implored him to substitute for it an umbrella as being more respectable. After morning service all England—M. O'Rell puts it plainly enough, L'Angleterre—goes home to dinner. During the interval between this meal and evening service—there does not appear to have been any afternoon service in the part of the world in which our author pursued his enquiries—all England takes a siesta, during which papa and mamma crack nuts and drink port wine, half asleep in their easy-chairs. As a crucial instance of the terrible severity of the English Sunday, M. O'Rell treats us to the following curious anecdote of Prince Bismarck: "M. de Bismarck, who, it appears, has a remarkable talent for whistling, landed at Hull on Sunday. 'It was the first time,' he says, 'that I had set foot on English soil. I began to whistle in the street. An Englishman stopped me and said, "Please not to whistle, sir." "Not whistle, why not?" "Because it is forbidden, it's Sunday." I resolved not to remain in Hull another hour, and started

for Edinburgh.'" It seems a pity that the ingenious author of this story did not, while he was about it, give it a greater air of probability.

For some other queer experiences of English life, which M. O'Rell appears to have had, we must refer our readers to his book, which, as we have before intimated, well deserves to be carefully studied. The moral to be drawn from the strange mistakes the writer makes is, that we should all do well to mistrust the superficial views of men and manners which casual foreign travel is likely to give us, and that, when we find so careful and well-informed a writer going so wrong as M. O'Rell sometimes does, we should recognise the extreme difficulty of forming a fair judgment of foreign customs and manners, and generalise on such matters a little less than we are all too much accustomed to do.

SONG.

A BOUQUET for my love who loves me not !

What shall I gather ? Rich dark roses set

In thorns, ah me, like love ; or lilies fair,

Tall bloodless lily-blooms ; or violets wet

And sweet with night's dews ; or carnations rare ?

And yet—

White poppy buds are best, that teach one to forget,

A song for my dear love who loves me not !

Sing, blackbird, thrilling in yon leafy brake ;

Coo, cushat, coo ; chant, thrush, thy sweetest strain ;

Thou nightingale with passionate throbblings wake

Pain in her heart, who heeds not of my pain,

And make

Her pity him, who dies for her sweet sake.

A BOARDING-HOUSE ROMANCE.

A STORY IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

MOST of the guests were already in their places at the dinner-table when the Gräfin Rolandseck and her daughter entered.

At Mr. Trevelyan's request two seats had been reserved for them at Frau Sommerrock's right hand. By the law of boarding-house precedence, Trevelyan, as the guest of longest standing, was entitled to the seat of honour, but by his cunning suggestion he found himself third, and neighbour to the younger of the two ladies.

He was the only person present whom Frau Sommerrock introduced formally, and the cold inclination of the head with which he was favoured by both ladies made him more than suspect that they would have been better pleased if no exception had been made in the way of introduction. After a few conventional remarks upon the weather, Mr. Trevelyan relapsed into silence, not

feeling sure enough either of his German, or of their attention, to venture more.

Without any appearance of doing so, he observed them closely throughout the meal. He was not prepossessed by the elder lady, who looked haughty and discontented. He supposed she must have been a beauty once, unless she was only the stepmother of the young gräfin, but wrinkles, and the loss of anything like a complexion, had spirited away all pretensions to good looks. Her figure was too stout and shapeless for dignity, her manners were snappish and unpleasant. On the whole, the American felt a little curious as to the grounds on which she set up for being so very little lower than the angels.

She seemed "uncertain, coy, and hard to please" as regarded her food. He saw her daughter and Frau Sommerrock exchange more than one glance of understanding when she refused anything in a particularly impatient manner, and marvelled at the gentle persuasiveness they both employed to induce her to partake of the dishes for which her contempt was less openly expressed. He saw, too, that they both bent their energies to entertaining her with lively and amusing conversation, and on her occasionally rewarding them with a slight smile, they looked positively delighted. She talked to her daughter in French, but she was obliged to carry on her conversation with Frau Sommerrock in her native tongue. She spoke to her, however, as if they were alone, or at a restaurant, carefully ignoring the presence of the rest of the visitors. Fortunately these were for the most part engaged in conversation among themselves, and the countess's rudeness excited little or no notice except from Mr. Trevelyan.

He admired the young gräfin's conduct throughout the repast; it betrayed a great deal of affection and unselfishness, combined with no little tact. With her appearance he was not nearly so much struck as in the morning. She was undeniably handsome, but after all, her beauty turned out to be of a proud, reserved type, that seemed over-conscious of its own value. On nearer acquaintance he missed the rare play of expression which had thrilled him in the morning, as a beautiful poem or a fine strain of music thrills. When he remarked how unchanged the beautiful face remained during the long meal, and the perfect self-possession the girl displayed in each action, he almost wondered whether he had invested her with a charm in his mind,

which was foreign to her naturally. He tried to recall that something in her face which had inspired him with a kind of pity for her. Looking at her now, as she sat there serene, beautiful, perfectly dressed, it seemed folly to have imagined that she knew any care beyond occasional ennui, a liberty to have assumed that her happiness could in any great degree be dependent upon another.

At the conclusion of the meal everybody went into the drawing-room—the Rolandsecks alone failed to put in an appearance.

Mr. Trevelyan went out upon the balcony and was soon apparently absorbed in contemplation of the mountains—not so absorbed, however, but that he would have been instantly conscious of the entrance of a certain person into the salon, and have abandoned his post of observation and his unsocial behaviour simultaneously.

Calm as he appeared outwardly, the American found it very hard work to remain passively upon the balcony until coffee was served at eight, yet he could not tear himself away earlier, as there was just a chance that the Rolandsecks might come down for it. As soon as he had satisfied himself that this was not the case, he left the room and set out for a long, lonely walk.

The sense of being free from observation was a great relief. He was not a little ashamed of the excited state of his feelings; it was something quite new to him, who by nature possessed more than the usual coolness and indifference of his countrymen. For the first time that he could remember his coolness and self-confidence were a little shaken. Not that he did not even now entertain a sufficiently high opinion of himself and his desirability as a sound investment for any lady matrimonially inclined, but he was not by any means sure that his fancy had lighted upon precisely the lady who would know how to properly appreciate the advantages he had to offer.

He was wealthy, but he reflected that the Germans did not know the real value of money. His wife would have the entrée into the first society in the States, society as accomplished and brilliant as anything in Europe, but the German nobility being bigoted and exclusive on the subject of rank in inverse ratio to their enlightenment on other subjects, it was a thousand to one that a Countess Rolandseck would sneer at that society. He flattered himself that his own mental

endowments were beyond those "common to the race," but as they were all bent in the direction of progress and liberty—as not only education but his own judgment made him a Republican—how could he hope they would tell in his favour with an aristocrat?

He ended his reflections with a sigh, yet his face did not fall nor did the resolute expression of his mouth waver, for the simple reason that he was only admitting to himself the difficulties of the situation, while the determination to overcome them was so strong upon him that they only lent additional piquancy to the undertaking. In his heart of hearts he never dreamed that he would be thwarted in the fulfilment of his wish; he flattered himself that he could grapple successfully with greater difficulties than those which threatened to obstruct his path.

As a matter of fact, however, Trevelyan had a much smaller likelihood of success in his suit than he had any idea of, if he could be said to have any at all.

Personally Gabrielle von Rolandseck was all that he dreamed her to be, allowing only for the limelight which the imagination of a lover will always throw upon the object of his choice:

Her character was a fine one by nature, but it had also many natural faults as all noble, outspoken characters have. A very sweet disposition and much unselfishness are rarely united to great personal beauty and unusual talents, where the lungs are altogether sound. This was the case with Gabrielle now, but it would certainly not have been so had her life been a different one, had the chastening hand of sorrow been laid less heavily upon her. As a child she had been self-willed, exacting, passionate, and proud—she was the latter still in a dangerous degree.

Her mother loved her devotedly, and had sacrificed her life to her from her infancy. It was many years before Gabrielle learned that that love was a gift and not a right.

Gabrielle's childhood had been a singularly lonely one, but it was not sad, she herself having spirits enough to have brightened a dungeon. In after years, when she came to look back upon the past, she fancied that her mother must have been in rather narrow circumstances in her earliest youth, for her first memories were of a very small and simple household. A change occurred when she was nearly eleven. They removed to a large

town. Their manner of life was no longer as simple as it had been; their house was large and handsomely furnished; they had a carriage, and more servants than before.

In spite of these changes Countess Rolandseck saw as little of society as ever, and her young daughter began to feel the lack of acquaintance keenly. She grew tired of perpetual walks and drives with no one but her mother for company. As she grew older she frequently complained bitterly about it, but on this one point her wishes were powerless to affect her mother's decision. She told Gabrielle that she had a great antipathy to visiting, herself, and that she did not intend to allow her daughter to become dependent on society for her happiness; that she would find a greater, as well as a more reliable source of pleasure in her music, painting, and other studies. The girl shook her head impatiently, saying those things were all very well, but she wanted to see something of the world, too. A little time after she begged her mother to let her read some novels, as she was seventeen now.

The request startled Gräfin Rolandseck, and made her very uneasy. She had thought to shut out the world and all its ways by shutting out the books that told of it; but Gabrielle was beginning to find out that certain things had been kept from her, and beginning to crave for them with the longing that the forbidden always inspires.

The gräfin could not conceal her anxiety about her daughter's state of feeling, but she remained firm to her decision nevertheless. Gabrielle was never to go into society as other girls did.

Her daughter had too much pride to pursue the subject, but she showed decided resentment at this treatment.

The countess bore her changed manner for some time with outward calmness, but secret grief. Gabrielle was the one object she loved out of the whole world, her happiness was more precious to her than her own life; it was nothing but constant brooding and grieving over certain existing bars to that happiness that had undermined her mother's health and affected her temper. It now seemed to the sad and disappointed woman as if fate were not satisfied with the measure of her misfortunes, but meant her to lose with everything else the last thing her heart clung to—her daughter's love.

Dismayed at the bare idea, she hastened

to take what she regarded as a desperate measure against it.

She wrote to her sister, the wife of an officer, who lived in Berlin, and told her that in spite of having refused her many previous invitations, she would be glad if she would have Gabrielle with her for a few weeks, as the girl needed a change of scene greatly. She need not impress upon her sister to be careful that her daughter was regarded just as one of her own younger girls in spite of Gabrielle's being a few years older than they; Frau von Schönberg knowing sufficiently well the reasons that would prevent her ever being formally introduced into society.

The girl went to Berlin shortly after.

Her uncle and aunt, whom she found two warm and sympathetic characters, were delighted with her; she had not been in the house a week before she could wind every inmate of it round her finger.

Frau von Schönberg, in accordance with her sister's wish, meant to keep her strictly in the schoolroom, but the girl enjoyed her company so much, and had such a naive pleasure in seeing an occasional caller, that her kind-hearted aunt could not find it in her heart to deny her such a trifling indulgence. Besides which, since she had come to know her niece, the reasons against her going into society, which had seemed sufficiently strong before, dwindled down considerably. Frau von Schönberg would have given a great deal to be allowed to take her under her wing and introduce her with her own eldest girl, but prudence forbade such a course too decidedly for her to think about the matter seriously, much less broach it to Gräfin Rolandseck.

It so happened that a lady who had chanced to see Gabrielle when calling upon her aunt, included her with her relatives when sending out cards for a dance.

If the invitation had not been addressed to the girl herself she would never have heard of it; as it was, it came direct into her hands.

She handed the card to Frau von Schönberg with a kindling eye, and an ecstatic "Oh, look, auntie!"

"But you cannot go, you know, my dear," remonstrated the lady feebly, for she saw the delight in the girl's face.

Gabrielle looked at her not only with disappointment but reproach.

Frau von Schönberg sympathised so thoroughly with the girl's longing for a little of the pleasure natural to her age and station, that she could not refuse her silent

entreaty with enough decision to silence her effectually.

Gabrielle had never wished for anything so much in her life as she wished to go to this ball. She knew that her aunt was very fond of her and very indulgent, and she presumed a little upon both facts. By dint of endless entreaties, some even accompanied by the "unanswerable tear," she succeeded in wringing an unwilling consent from Frau von Schönberg.

It should be said that in thus allowing herself to be over-persuaded, her aunt was not altogether acting against her better judgment, although she knew she was doing what was not quite right towards the girl's mother, entertaining the views she did. Like other women of the world, Frau von Schönberg was a match-maker, and she could not but think that it would be a great advantage to Gabrielle if she could overcome the scruples which made her mother hesitate to allow her to take her proper place in the world. If all went smoothly and successfully on her first appearance, might not Gräfin Rolandseck be persuaded to alter her resolution?

The evening came.

Gabrielle felt uneasy, for she knew that she was about to run counter to the only express command her mother had ever laid upon her. At the same time she felt greatly elated, and full of pleasant anticipations.

She was secretly astonished and delighted with her appearance when the maid had completed her toilet, sentiments that were evidently shared by her uncle and aunt.

They had not been in the ball-room a quarter of an hour, before everyone was asking who the distinguished-looking fair girl in white Indian silk was.

She soon found her programme filled, and herself dancing with all the youthful enjoyment of Cinderella, and long before the witching hour of midnight she had as completely forgotten that she was running any risk in doing so. She had forgotten everything, in fact, but the intoxicating incense of homage and admiration which she was drinking in for the first time in her life. She had never been at a brilliant entertainment before, much less the flower of such an assembly.

Her latent pride flashed out in this first public triumph. It shone through the veiled lustre of her grey eyes, it was stamped on her delicate mouth, except when her lips chanced to part for a moment in a happy smile.

It grew late, only one last polonaise with her uncle as partner, and she would leave the enchanted palace behind her for ever.

Herr von Schönberg stopped a moment to exchange a greeting with the wife of a brother-officer.

"Who is she?" Gabrielle heard a lady behind ask another in French.

She strained her ears to catch the reply, eager for a little more flattery to the much she had already received.

"Don't you know?" came the answer; "she is the talk of the whole room."

"Ah!" thought Gabrielle with a delicious sense of gratified vanity.

"She is the daughter of that Count Rolandseck who died in prison some twelve years ago. He had committed forgery, you remember? It was said that the countess had the good taste to keep out of society, although she came into a fortune after her husband's death, but of course with a pretty daughter like that she could scarcely resist making a desperate effort to marry her even though her father was a criminal. But it is a little hard that people of our position should run the risk of meeting such persons in society on an equal footing. It might not matter so much for us ladies, but our sons——"

The colonel, who had been absorbed in conversation, suddenly remarked that his niece leant very heavily upon his arm. He looked at her; her face was white and rigid, there was an expression of acute suffering in her eyes.

"My dear, you feel faint?"

"I—I have danced too much. Come away."

It was after twelve, but Cinderella's fine clothes had suddenly changed to rags all the same.

CHAPTER V.

So that was the spectre that had haunted her mother's life, that the grim fact that had underlain all her devotion and tenderness!

What suffering such knowledge must have caused the proud woman! Gabrielle could not endure the bare thought of it. Stung to the quick with shame and humiliation as she herself was, this revelation of what her mother had been secretly going through all these years appalled her. There was something little less than awful in the mere discovery of the complete mystery that a human being might be, even to the nearest and dearest. Gabrielle thought with keen self-reproach and remorse of how

little she had valued her mother's affection all her life, how little she had dreamed of the high and noble motives which had prompted her to persevere in a course that she herself had rendered so bitter and difficult. How blind and mad had been her longing after the forbidden fruit—what punishment her disobedience had brought with it!

She went home the next day; her one desire was to go back to her mother and to never leave her more.

Her first words when the greeting was over, were:

"Mother, I have done a very wicked thing, but you must forgive me, for your love is all I have in the world, all I have and all I want, but if I ever lose that I do not see how I am to live."

Gräfin Rolandseck looked at her, suspense and agitation in her face.

Gabrielle told the story, concealing and palliating nothing.

The gräfin listened to the end with a sad but most compassionate expression.

Then she took the girl in her arms, and Gabrielle learnt what "as one whom his mother comforteth" means. In the midst of suffering which might otherwise have deepened into despair, she first began to realise the depth of the affection that had been hers all her life, and which, stronger than ever, was given for her solace now. Wrung as her heart was she was satisfied with the compensation.

In broken words to her mother, in a solemn vow to her own heart, she promised never to forsake her from that day forth, never to seek pleasures or interests in which she could have no share, but to be her one friend and companion, as well as daughter, all her life.

Gräfin Rolandseck had listened to her with mingled feelings. It was a great shock to her to know that the disgrace, which she had made it the business of her life to keep from her daughter, because the knowledge of it could not fail to embitter her whole life, had, nevertheless, come to her ears; yet it was a relief to know that poor Gabrielle saw her position in its true colours at last, that she knew of the existence of that something underneath her rank and wealth that took the glamour from both.

They shed no tears, and they spoke very little about the matter, but they looked into each other's eyes, and knew what the mournful yet proud expression in both meant.

They knew that for this fair young head

no orange-blossoms were ever to bloom—that for this warm young heart no kindred soul was to exist, for between her and that earthly paradise was the barred gate of a disgrace, guarded by the stern angel of righteous pride.

The aspect of her life having been thus changed, Gabrielle persuaded her mother to change the way of it, too. The loneliness and monotony of her home were even harder to bear now than formerly. Wisdom told her that if she meant to make anything of her life it must be filled up, that emptiness and idleness would be fatal to her peace of mind.

Gräfin Rolandseck was ready to meet her daughter's wishes in everything as far as she could.

They shut up their house and spent the next two years abroad, wintering in Italy, and passing one summer in England and one in France.

The third winter they spent in their old house, Gabrielle devoting her leisure to music and painting, for the study of which the town—one of the great art-centres of Germany—offered every advantage. From that time it became a settled thing for them to pass the winter at home, and to spend the summer in travelling. They made a point of staying at pensions on the Continent in preference to hotels, as it was a necessity for Gabrielle to associate with people sometimes.

Gräfin Rolandseck at first feared that this kind of life might have its dangers for so attractive a girl as her daughter, under the exceptional circumstances. Experience, however, proved her fears to be groundless. The mother's eyes grew very sharp now, for she felt that the happiness of her child's future might depend upon them. She knew that Gabrielle could not fail to inspire admiration wherever she went, and might very easily inspire something more difficult to deal with, therefore at the first sign of anything of the kind the gräfin took care to propose that they should continue their journey immediately. Although in more than one instance it was a disappointment to Gabrielle to have to cut short a time of enjoyment, she felt the wisdom of her mother's decision, and obeyed her without a murmur. What little secret pangs such sudden breaks caused her she never betrayed, nor did they last long, for the trouble she and her mother shared in common had knitted their hearts together very closely, and in the consciousness of making her mother's

life happy Gabrielle found a very real happiness herself, so much so that she was usually unaffectedly cheerful, and believed that on the whole few people found more to enjoy in life than she.

SOME ROMAN REMAINS.

PERHAPS no more distinct evidence is required of the thoroughness which characterised the old Roman system of colonisation than the existence at this day of manners and customs which have descended to us from them, but slightly changed through all the periods of revolution and disruption which have swept over our island since the day when the last Roman legion was recalled home.

Fewer and fewer every day are growing the more palpable vestiges of that iron rule in the shape of buildings and constructions. Modern exigencies and comparatively modern vandalism have changed the face of Roman England as it existed until a comparatively recent date, and yet the old Roman social influence has lingered amongst us to an extent hardly to be realised except by those to whom the pottering about in the odd nooks and corners of a long-dead world is the delight of life. When we consider that this influence was the work of an occupation extending over five hundred years, it does not seem so remarkable that we should still possess traces of it; but when we compare its extent with that of the later Danish and Saxon influences still amongst us; when we run back over the pages of our subsequent history; when we think for a moment of the dark, desolate age which succeeded the departure of the last Roman in the year 411, an age full of influences sufficiently strong to sweep away everything but what was built on the surest foundations; when we consider how many other influences have been born, have flourished, and have utterly disappeared since that date, we are obliged to confess that the social as well as the military rule of Rome was, as it has always been characterised, indeed of iron.

The study of these influences upon England is so interesting, and partakes so little of the dry character of usual antiquarian researches, that we have selected a few instances which will serve to show that many of what we are accustomed to deem our most typically national observances and customs, are in reality but the shadows

—in some cases the substantial shadows—of observances and customs which were popular in the Roman world when Britain was but a vast forest and morass, inhabited by savages and wild beasts.

For simplicity and regularity we have chosen to follow briefly the course of our calendar, and to note in how many instances our modern observances are traceable to Roman origin.

We open the very first day of the year with a distinctly Roman custom—that of giving presents. Slaves and clients in ancient Rome presented their masters and patrons with figs and dates, wrapped up in tinsel, upon the first day of the New Year, in return for which, of course, they received largesse. The custom of present-giving from inferiors to superiors in England is not a general one; but we may note that when it is carried out, if it be not on a birthday, it is on New Year's Day.

The instance of our modern celebration of Twelfth Night brings us face to face with a still more striking analogy. The Roman Saturnalia, which were held just about our Christmas time, ended about the sixth of January, and the occasion was, of course, marked by a climax of festivity and rejoicing.

Just as we used, not long ago, to draw lots by beans for the election of a king and queen of the evening, so did the Romans in the same manner choose the "Rex Convivii" or the "Arbiter bibendi" of the closing feast of their Saturnalia.

The popular origin of Candlemas is attributed to the Catholic practice of blessing the church tapers on this day; but we find, as in so many other cases, that the apparently Christian derivation of the feast is in reality but a relic of paganism with which the common people would not part, and which, therefore, although altered in significance, remained unchanged in outward form by the early fathers of the Church. Upon this day, or near it, the Romans worshipped Proserpine, who was stolen by Pluto from the Sicilian meadows; her mother, Ceres, sought for her with lighted tapers, hence tapers were the votive offerings on the day.

Antiquaries have sufficiently proved that St. Valentine had no more to do with the familiar customs on the 14th of February than had St. George with England, and that their real origin is a relic of the Roman rule in Britain.

Just at this period of the year the Lupercalia were in full swing, and the

Roman youths were accustomed to draw the names of lasses in honour of the goddess Februa - Juno, because, they said, with their usual combination of observation of Nature with superstitious observance, at this time of the year birds choose their mates.

Upon the mid-Sunday of Lent, in some places in England—notably Bristol in the south and Durham in the north—apprentices and servants were accustomed to make presents to their masters, and the name given to the day, Mothering Sunday, still exists in places where the observances have long since died out.

This Mothering Sunday custom can be plainly traced to the Roman Hilaria, which were celebrated about the same time of the year; a festival held in honour of the mother of the gods, offerings to her being laid upon the altars. The fathers of the Church, however, objected to this relic of paganism. Mothering Sunday was observed by visits to the mother churches, and the offerings, originally laid at the feet of Juno, became assimilated with what are now known as Easter offerings.

In the north of England, especially in the counties of Northumberland and Durham, the second Sunday before Easter is still known as Carling Sunday, and the popular dish consists of beans fried in butter, a sort of extra mortification, which may, perhaps, have some foundation in the fact that the orthodox funeral feast of the Romans consisted of fried beans. "Furmety" also, a northern dish peculiar to this season, is indubitably derived from the Latin "frumentum."

The May Day celebrations of merrie England may be traced, perhaps, more distinctly than any other to Roman sources. At this time of the year the Floralia were celebrated, wherever the Roman rule was recognised, with the utmost enthusiasm and unanimity. Most notably are the modern festivals at Lynn in Norfolk, and at Helston in Cornwall, on the 8th of May, of Roman likeness. The horn-blowing at Lynn reminds us that the citizens of ancient Rome were summoned to the celebration of the Floralia by the notes of the horn; the garlanded doll carried about is of course all that remains of the original Flora; whilst at Helston the inexorable condition, that no one of any rank soever should put his hand to work upon "Furry" Day, is a remnant of the Roman decree of universal holiday and rejoicing during the Floralia.

During Rogation Week it is still the custom in Kent, Devonshire, and Herefordshire to go "youling," that is to say, invoking the apple-trees to bear a good crop, and the origin of the term "youling" has even been traced to (Æolus, the god of the winds, although the connection of "youling," as also Yuletide, with the Hindoo Huli festival appears more probable when we consider how many of our customs and stories owe their origin to the East.

On Ascension Day the bounds are regularly beaten in the London City parishes, although the custom has fallen into disuse in the country, and this is traced to the annual perambulations of the Romans in honour of their god Terminus, who presided over gates and boundaries. Where the custom yet exists in rustic England, it is sometimes termed "doing the dole," "dole" being the Anglo-Saxon for "boundary"—hence its part formation of the word "dolmen" as incorrectly applied to sepulchral monuments.

Another Rogation Week custom of distinctly Roman origin is that of well "dressing" or "flowering" as practised to this day in many of the Derbyshire dales, and especially at Tissington. The Romans deemed wells and fountains and rivers as particularly sacred, and the Fontinalia was a prominent festival in their year. We may remember in connection with this what Seneca says: "Wherever a spring rises or a river flows, there should we build altars and offer sacrifices."

On the 23rd of June—Midsummer or St. John's Eve—bonfires were, and may be occasionally now, lighted in honour of the sun. These are often called Bal-fires, and derive their origin from Bel or Baal, the sun-god of the Phœnicians, and hence of the Britons; but from the fact that at this season the ancient Romans celebrated their Palilia, the festival in honour of Pales, the god of shepherds and flocks, the suggestion occurs that the name Bal-fire might be connected with Pales as well as with Bel.

In Northamptonshire a custom existed upon this day which bore a true Roman stamp. The country folk placed a cushion garlanded with flowers upon a stool at the junction of cross-roads, and solicited alms, which they spent, in the orthodox English manner, upon a grand carouse in the evening. Now at this time of the year the Romans celebrated their games of the cross-roads, a prominent feature of which was the exposure of the domestic Lares

and Penates, duly garlanded and decked out, and all who passed expressed their wishes for future domestic felicity in the shape of offerings.

In September the great Stourbridge Fair was held, and in the seventeenth century was regarded as the principal fair without exception of all Europe. It is said to have originated with the Emperor Carausius, who extended, if he did not absolutely cut, the great canal which runs from Peterborough through the fens of Lincolnshire to the Trent, whence it passes by a series of natural rivers to York and the north in one direction, and by the fens of Huntingdon and Cambridge to the north in another. By this canal the produce of the south—principally corn—was brought to the north, and during the time the boats were gathering together and discharging their loads to each other at the junction of the two branches—generally a fortnight—the fair was held, and has been held ever since in spite of the loss of its original significance.

Undoubtedly the origin of the old custom of harvest-homes is to be found in the usages of the Romans, who at the season of ingathering the crops, worshipped Ceres with most important rites and ceremonies. Until within the past quarter of a century Ceres might be found reproduced upon the harvest-fields of all England, whether as in Northumberland and the eastern counties under the guise of a "Harvest Queen," or as in Devonshire as a twisted figure of choice stalks called a "knack," or in Norfolk as a "ben," or in the north as a "kern baby." The harvest-homes or "horkey suppers" exactly reproduce, in their temporary conditions of perfect equality between master and servants, the harvest-feasts held in the ancient days amongst the pleasant plains of Campania and under the shadow of the Alps.

Martinmas was invariably marked in Merrie England as a period of feasting and revelry, and corresponds exactly with the period occupied by the Venalia of the Romans. Indeed the saint himself is said to have been introduced into the place of Bacchus, for the reasons given before that the Early Church missionaries found it impossible to wean the people entirely from their prejudice in favour of old customs; hence he is deemed the patron of drunkards. So faithfully indeed did the English rustic carry out to the letter the old spirit of the Roman Bacchanalia,

that grows from landowners and farmers about the inability to get men to work during the Martinmas season, and patriotic laments that the common people should so debase themselves by drink and debauchery, are to be met with frequently in the annals of rustic England. To be "Martin drunk," says Mr. Brewer, was synonymous with being very intoxicated indeed, and he quotes the usage by Baxter in his *Saint's Rest* of the word Martin as meaning a drunkard.

It would be perhaps going too far to say that the nut-burning charms believed in by the peasantry of the North of England and of Scotland upon Hallowe'en, are of Roman origin, yet we know that the festival of Pomona was held about the end of November; that auguries and omens were invariably watched by the Romans during the celebration of their feasts; and that nuts in particular entered largely into the means employed in divination, especially upon the occasion of marriage, when it was the custom for the bridegroom to throw nuts amongst his relations and friends.

Even our Christmas festivities are an instance of the gradual transformation of Pagan into Christian observances, in deference to deeply-rooted popular prejudice. The period of time allotted to the Roman Saturnalia exactly corresponds with the old Christmas holidays of our forefathers. Our practice of giving Christmas boxes is clearly derived from the Roman custom of compounding for the annual license given to slaves of exchanging positions with their masters during the festival by a present of money. There is even an analogy discovered between our Innocents' Day and the great feast day of Saturn, upon which he was supposed to devour his own children, and during which festival all temples and houses were decorated with evergreens, hence, say some authorities, the origin of our custom of church and domestic ornamentation.

Sir Isaac Newton in his *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel*, quotes from Gregory Nyssen with relation to the fact that many of our old English Christian observances are the offspring of pagan customs. Nyssen says:

"The heathens were delighted with the festivals of their gods, and unwilling to part with those delights; and therefore Gregory, to facilitate their conversion, instituted annual festivals to the saints and martyrs. Hence it came to pass that for exploding the festivals of the heathens, the

principal festivals of the Christians succeeded in their room, as the keeping of Christmas with ivy and feasting, with playing and sports in the room of the Bacchanalia and Saturnalia; the celebrating of May Day with flowers, in the room of the Floralia; and the keeping of festivals to the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and divers of the apostles, in the room of the solemnities at the entrance of the sun into the signs of the Zodiac in the old Julian Calendar."

Apart from the greater instances of the lingering of old Roman influences in merrie England, we may note smaller facts which point to a similar origin.

For instance, we may cite the frequent custom of planting rose-trees upon graves. This may be noted at the village of Ockley, in Surrey, which was a minor station on the old Roman Stane Street, and we know that it was a constant habit amongst the Romans. Again, the prevalent superstition of hanging horse-shoes on doors, to keep away evil spirits, is analogous to the Roman custom of driving in nails for the same purpose. Again, the fast dying out custom of holding hiring-fairs is a survival of an invariable Roman institution; and, lastly, the common public-house sign of The Chequers, which is popularly supposed to have its origin in the coat-of-arms of the Earls Warrene, who held a monopoly of the licensing system in the reign of Edward the Third, should be properly attributed to ancient Rome, where it was almost universal as the sign of a house of public entertainment wherein "duodecim scripta" could be played—a fact proved by excavations in Rome, in Pompeii, and in England itself.

We might go on multiplying instances showing how the print of the five hundred years of Roman rule in England, although rapidly becoming undecipherable, may yet be detected here and there, but we should go far beyond the limits of a paper intended rather as an instructive sketch than as a learned disquisition.

JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XXIV. A SURPRISE FOR
MRS. HATTON.

OF the two visitors whose appearance was looked forward to with anxiety and dread this day in the household of which

Jenifer was a part, Mr. Josiah H. Whittler was the first to arrive.

His card, bearing his address at a New York club, but with no London address on it, was taken in grim silence by Ann, whose stern gaze he returned with a frank and open glance of utter unconsciousness.

"Did he speak to you? Did he ask you any questions?" Mrs. Hatton enquired, shivering as the card was given to her.

"He looked at me as innocent as a newborn babe, and never showed a sign of ever having seen me in his life. If I didn't know there's a trick hid behind everything he does, I should say I'm altered out of his knowledge and memory."

"You're not that, Ann," her mistress answered. Then the poor woman went in to meet the man whom she had once preferred to every relation, friend, and advantage the world offered her.

An instinct had made her dress herself and arrange her hair with unattractive sombreness and severity. She had been looking her best the previous night, she knew. Had she been looking her worst, perhaps he would not have sought her.

He was standing before the mantelpiece looking at an oil-painting of a picturesquely-situated old house, which had been left with its adjoining lands to Mrs. Hatton by her parents, and sold away from her by her husband. His countenance, as he turned round to meet her, betrayed the most placid indifference and contentment, and her indignation rose as she remembered that old home, and by whom it had been wrested from her.

His first words staggered her.

"I trust, Mrs. Hatton, that you will pardon a perfect stranger to England, its manners and social etiquette, for the liberty he has taken in calling to enquire for the health of a lady who so amiably and flatteringly did him the honour to desire an introduction to him last night."

These introductory sentences were spoken with the strongest American intonation, and most marked American mannerism, that Mrs. Hatton had ever heard. Nevertheless, though they staggered, they did not reassure her.

"Why have you come?" she gasped.

"Why have I come? The reply to such a question is obvious; it can simply be a repetition of my first remarks. A perfect stranger as I am to England and its social etiquette, I conceived I could be doing nothing wrong in seeking to make the acquaintance of a lady to-day who so

amiably did me the honour to wish to make mine last night. If I have been in error, I can only solemnly pledge myself never to intrude upon you again."

"What fresh wickedness are you planning?" she cried excitedly; "what mischief are you going to try and work for me now?"

"Again I must repeat that this being the first time I have ever set foot upon English soil, I am in ignorance of some of the more subtle forms of its social etiquette. Still, it strikes a stranger as just a little peculiar that he should be charged with wickedness, and accused of desiring to work mischief, when he does himself the honour of calling on a lady who so amiably requested to make his acquaintance the previous night."

"What is it you want?—speak out plainly," she sighed wearily, sitting down and clasping her arms in front of her, as if she would protect herself from him.

"I want nothing more than to receive the assurance that your health is completely restored."

She shuddered.

"You will, I trust, allow me to place a box at your disposal on the night of my first appearance on the English boards. It would give me the most profound pleasure to see you there, accompanied by the young lady who was with you last night. I did not have the opportunity of studying the young lady's lineaments, but I presumed she was your sister."

She knew he had presumed nothing of the kind; still, she was getting sorely perplexed.

"The young lady is lodging here. You know well that I have no sister."

"Mrs. Hatton, I do assure you that, in my ignorance of English social etiquette, I have omitted to make myself acquainted with your antecedents. Have I been remiss?"

"If I'd had a sister, probably she would have shared the property with me, and you wouldn't have been able to make ducks and drakes of it. Can you sit here quietly before me and ignore the past connected with that old home and me?"

She flung her hand out in passionate indication of the picture, and he turned and looked at it again with calm interest.

"Now, this is indeed a curious coincidence," he remarked coolly. "You are indignant with me for not knowing all about you, though this is the first time I have had the pleasure of treading English

soil, and I once had the pleasure of the acquaintance of a gentleman of your name, who was supposed to resemble me greatly."

She was startled into silent attention now.

"Yes, so it was," he went on, looking her steadily in the eyes. "Away in Frisco, on the occasion of my first adopting the theatrical profession, I had the melancholy satisfaction of burying my friend, Mr. Hatton. He died, and his friend, Josiah H. Whittler, was the solitary mourner at his grave. Before he died he gave me two photographs—one of a beautiful old English house, the other of a most interesting young English lady. As I look at you, I see that you are the original of the latter, and that this most interesting oil-painting is that of the former. I return the copies to your hands, for I feel that the painful office is laid upon me of informing you that you are a widow."

She knew that he was lying to her, but her horror of being in bondage and doubt again was so great, her yearning for peace and liberty was so strong!

She took the photographs. He rose to leave. She turned her head aside and heaved a sigh to relieve the feelings that she did not dare to speak.

"Having made you acquainted with the melancholy fact that you are a widow, I will not put myself to the useless pain of staying to witness your woe. I quite appreciate your suffering; in short, I am certain that I gauge the depth of it with accuracy. You have my best wishes for your future happiness. At the same time, I venture to ask for your congratulations on my own approaching nuptials, which will be celebrated in a munificent manner with a wealthy and prepossessing woman immediately on my return to New York."

He took his departure shortly after this, after uttering a few commonplaces that passed by her unheeding ear—took his departure in a cool unruffled manner that was ghastly in its familiarity to her; and she sat on, half-stunned, knowing that what he had told her was false, yet resolving not to expose the falsity of it, because of the peace, the rest, the liberty it would give her.

So she sat alone for an hour, during which hour she formed and unformed numerous resolutions. But through all there ran this strong thread of determination—she would accept without further enquiry all he had said.

At the end of the hour Ann came to her,

pinning to hear the worst and comfort her mistress. But Mrs. Hatton's determination forbade her having any confidante.

She kept her face buried on her arms as they rested on the table, so that its expression was concealed from the old servant, who knew how to read it like a book. But as Ann came close to her with the words, "My dearie, my dearie, how is it to be?" she put her hand out, and clasping her faithful old friend, said glibly and effectively:

"My fright has been for nothing. I was deceived by the likeness, which is extraordinary. The oddest part of it all is that he was attracted to call on me by hearing my name, for he was at Mr. Hatton's funeral in—some place in California. Yes—don't exclaim, for the shock of the whole thing has been almost more than I can bear—my husband is dead! He will never trouble me again."

"Look up, my dear missus, look up—look at me!"

But for answer, Mrs. Hatton only buried her face more closely on her arms, and said:

"Go and tell Mrs. and Miss Ray what I have told you. Tell them the shock has been great, and I shall not be able to speak of it for a long time. They have delicate tact; they will not wound me with questions."

On this hint, Ann withdrew, but as she went on her mission to the Rays, she thought:

"He've laid a trap, and she've fallen into it. I read so much as that in his face as he went away. Poor dear! who'd have thought it the day she was married that she'd live to welcome the news from his own lips that he was dead?"

As five o'clock drew near, Mrs. Ray worked herself up into quite a state of glad expectancy. It would be quite pleasant, she felt, to give her consent to Jenifer's marriage with a man who could relieve her of the trouble, and hard work, and anxieties, and disappointments of a public life. For, without having exchanged a word with her daughter on the subject, Mrs. Ray had made up her mind that Jenifer would give up Madame Voglio and all her hopes of being a queen of song.

"She sings well enough already for the best society, and as, naturally, that will be the only sphere in which Captain Edgecumb will allow his wife to sing, my dear girl will have rest from this time," the

mother thought with motherly consideration and complacency.

Then she looked at the clock, saw that the hour had come, and felt happily nervous as well as gladly exultant.

Jenifer had gone out for a walk.

"I can't take up the ways of an engaged young woman all at once," she had explained to her mother. "If he comes to dinner, I shall see him then, and it will all seem easier and more natural while we are eating and drinking."

"He will naturally expect to see you as soon as he has spoken to me," Mrs. Ray instructed.

But Jenifer declined to receive instruction on that point, and her mother had to give in.

"I shouldn't know what to do with him here for two hours without other people. It will all come to me in time to know how to behave, but I can't begin till dinner to-night."

She walked away briskly through the many leafy roads and places that abound in this neighbourhood, along the canal, through the Bishop's Road into Queen's Road, and so on to the welcome shade of the avenues in Kensington Gardens.

Being under green trees always made her think much of Moor Royal. She was thinking so much of Moor Royal this day, that she felt no surprise at finding herself face to face with Mr. Boldero.

"I only came to town this afternoon; and, Jenifer, my good genius is in the ascendant. It led me for a stroll before dinner, after which I'm going to Hamilton Place to see you and your mother and Mrs. Hatton."

All thoughts of Captain Edgecumb fled from Jenifer's mind and memory.

"You shall dine with us; you shall walk home with me—not just yet, I want more turf and trees—and dine with us, nowhere else. I have so much to tell you and so much to hear."

"First tell me, are you happy?" he asked.

And she told him that she was.

"But seeing you makes me so much happier, that I suppose I've been deluding myself a little about being perfectly satisfied all this time. You seem to bring Moor Royal and the old life back to me."

Then she began to tell him about Hubert and Jack's necessities, and of her own

indignation at their applying to her mother for help from her pittance.

"This weary three years! Never mind, Jenifer, they will soon pass, and then——"

He did not say what "then," but somehow Jenifer felt that, if he was content, so might she be.

She told him about the "groundless fright and shock" poor Mrs. Hatton had received the night before, and somehow the neutral ground occupied their attention a considerable time. She confessed that at first she had not liked Mrs. Hatton, but that now she felt how all the little artificial airs which had annoyed her had been assumed to cover a deep grief.

"But now all that's over; she has been in a false position so long, that the reality of her life now will bring out all that's good in her, I'm sure," she said, little thinking how far falser the poor woman's position was now than it had ever been before. Then in her kind-hearted desire to please him about his old friend, she went on to tell him how excellently Mrs. Hatton managed for them, and how daintily and economically they were boarded and lodged. And he listened and looked as if he knew nothing about it.

By the time they had discoursed Mrs. Hatton and her dawning excellencies they were close upon Hamilton Place.

"Won't Mrs. Ray object to my surprising her at your dinner-hour in this unexpected way?" he asked.

And Jenifer remembered Captain Edgecumb would be there—and all that his being there meant.

"Stay," she said, stopping and facing him with the whole revelation in her glowing face, and kind truthful eyes. "I ought to have told you before, but I forgot it. Captain Edgecumb will be here. I've promised to marry him. I did it only last night."

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